

95a
5.2.2

planning for you?

EDUCATION ELITE OPPOSED

[June 1971]

UNIVERSITY OF THE AUSTRALIAN
22 JUN 1971

on dit

broadsheet no.3

Only three student observers attended the first open committee meeting of perhaps the most important University Council Committee to be constituted in the recent history of this University. It is a committee established by the Council at its last meeting to investigate planning in the University. "Planning" at first seems an ambiguous term. Its wide scope needs firstly to be appreciated. It means, or at least should mean, a consideration of every aspect of this University — academic and non-academic. It relates to what this University will be like in five, ten and fifty years time. It affects every student, every member of staff, every ancillary member and the wider Australian community.

At present the committee is calling for submissions to decide who will constitute this planning committee and what its terms of reference will be. The complete democratisation of this University, from the grass roots level up, is at issue. The debate that should be carried out is far more important for the future lives of generations of students than the recent important debates on the University Act. The opportunity arises for the actualisation of student power demands.

By Chris White

The committee, consisting of Justice R. F. Mitchell, as chairman, Miss V. T. Baddams (headmistress of Woodlands), Professors F. B. Bull (Mechanical Engineering), J. G. Cornell (French), L. W. Cox (Gynaecology), Dr. J. R. Casey Smith, and Messrs. J. A. Dunning (retired headmaster P.A.C.) and A. R. Vicary (tutor, Politics), at its first meeting decided to seek submissions from interested bodies and individuals by mid-August of this year. Its next meeting will be on Friday, July 30th, 7.30 p.m. in the Council Rooms. The list of bodies (which by no means is exhaustive) includes the Education Committee, the Financial Committee, the Staff Association, the S.R.C., the Union, the Graduates Union, the Postgraduate Association, all faculties, the Ancillary Staff Association, Sites and Grounds, Standing Committee of the Senate, Sports Association, Board of Adult Education, Library Committee, other Universities and any submissions from interested individuals or groups.

The committee, somewhat surprisingly, did decide that they would accept confidential submissions that would not be debated or looked at at an open meeting. One wonders why anybody would want to keep such an important matter secret.

EDUCATION ELITE

The reasons for the calling of this committee has an interesting history. Few academics and students would have heard of the developments. This is of course not altogether surprising. Only avid readers of the Council minutes, or the academic elite on the Education committee, would have heard of the plans or been aware of their implications.

As one committee member remarked, it was a surprise that anyone had heard of the committee's first meeting.

The most important aspect of this history is the role played by the University's Education committee. This committee consists largely of heads of departments and top administrative bureaucrats, and is without doubt the most powerful and influential group at this University. The University Council, although formally with ultimate decision-making power, rarely over-rides or rejects any recommendations from the Education committee. During the debate on the constitution of the Council, it was often expressed that the Council was,

like Parliament, a mere rubber stamp. There are no prizes for those who have already guessed that the Education committee has already made lengthy suggestions on the constitution and nature of the proposed Planning Committee. They suggest that the Planning committee be one of its sub-committees with responsibility for long range academic planning including the preparation of submissions to the A.U.C.

AIMS OF UNIVERSITY

Of course, ideas don't fall from heaven. They come from social practice. Dr. Harry Medlin's (Physics) social practice is central to the history of these planning proposals. In 1969, Dr. Medlin wrote to the Vice-Chancellor suggesting the formation of the Planning committee. The matter was looked at, but action was slow. On the 27th January of this year, Dr. Medlin submitted to the Council his arguments. I quote from his prepared document:

"There are few if any people today who would argue that there should be no planning for the future but on the contrary the majority would assert that planning is absolutely essential. There are those who then would argue, correctly in my opinion, that, in an increasingly competitive society such as ours, the elements of wise planning are of increasing complexity and subtlety. The vision required for planning and the ability to guide development are not necessarily related to universities' traditional status criteria of scholarship and 'academic excellence.'

"Given that there is to be any debate at all on the subject, the questions to be answered therefore, perhaps among others, are:—

- (a) What is the purpose of our planning?
- (b) What are the criteria against which judgements are made?
- (c) Who plans?

"In other words, what are we planning for, how and who is to do it?

"In my opinion these are questions for the Council to set itself and to answer. They are not of course immediately answerable but will be otherwise answered by default if a present anachronistic trend is allowed to develop.

"I shall argue that recent developments within the University have produced a dangerous or at best undesirable bifurcation.

"On the one hand, the Council has recently encouraged the University community to devote considerable time and thought to discussing the University Act.

"On the other hand, there is in my opinion, ample evidence within the University that what is at best an obsolescent elite has arrogated or desires to arrogate a number of functions including that of planning. I shall argue that elite is in my opinion, inadequate to perform the planning function and that in any case this trend should be arrested."

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Dr. Medlin attempted to move at the February Council for the formation of a committee to investigate planning which would report to Council by July, 1971. This move was put off, largely by the pressures of the Education committee. Again no prizes as to who are the "obsolescent elite desiring to arrogate a number of functions including that of planning."

Dr. Medlin submitted a further document to the April meeting of the Council. I quote from his prepared document, where he was speaking to the standing sub-committee of the Education Committee.

"(a) That, although the principal function of the University is unquestionably to concern itself with the business of tertiary education, the corporate character of the University demands that it also concerns itself with many questions other than purely academic ones; and that accordingly the governing body must also get the best advice possible on financial, legal, architectural, sociological, political, cultural, physical and industrial questions as they arise or are likely to arise.

(b) That an elected Council is, and in the view of most people, should be, the body answerable for the governing of the University.

(c) That, in the same way as the Council should not and does not dictate academic policy, the academic apparatus should not be used to dictate general policy.

(d) That in my view a sharp distinction exists between the two questions of the restructuring of the academic apparatus of the University on the one hand and of the planning of the University on the other. The former is, in my opinion, a problem for the academic staff alone; but for the whole of it

and not just the Heads of Departments. The latter question is, in my opinion, a problem for the whole University which has yet to discover how even to begin to maximise its collective wisdom. The exercise of discovery is, among other things, a necessary consequence of the debate on the Draft Act where the reformers were led to believe that the democratisation would continue and that power really would go "to the people" and be seen so to go and not pass either to the professional administration or to amateur elites working in closed committees.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

(e) That, in my opinion, there were at least a dozen important examples within my personal experience where the Education Committee, and indeed on one occasion its Standing Sub-Committee alone, had made recommendations to the Council on matters that were beyond its general competence."

Dr. Medlin opposes the recommendation of the Education Committee that it should "itself continue to be responsible for consideration of matters of policy and general management of this University" and that the planning committee should be one of its sub-committees. He referred to the debates on the University Act and on the outside research grants and comments:

"The question of the planning of the University is more important and embracing than any or all of these and indeed it can be argued that some or all of them would or should have been anticipated some time ago by a widely representative planning committee of the Council.

"I have no doubts that it would be abortively premature to establish any general Planning Committee in the absence of a full, frank and open enquiry by a Special Committee of the Council whereby anyone who wished to contribute could do so. Indeed, submissions should be sought and seriously considered so that no one could ever reasonably claim not to have been given a fair go.

"Finally, I believe that policy matters should always be determined by amateurs, preferably elected and therefore removable from time to time with a minimum of fuss. It seems to me therefore that this planning enquiry, which I hope to see, should be convened by an amateur."

In his demands Dr. Medlin has opened up for enquiry and debate the most important issue facing students this year, and in years to come.

MRS. M. RESIGNS

Mrs. Joan Middleton, Administrative Secretary of the Student's Representative Council, for six years, is leaving. Often the "power behind the scenes", always doing the bulk of administrative organisation of S.R.C. affairs, acquiring over the years the knowledge of how to do what, where and when most efficiently, tolerant of the changing nature of student activities but never failing to express her personal views of what's happening. Often the "mother" figure for each incoming S.R.C. executive, Mrs. Middleton has always cheerfully and efficiently carried out her job. To replace her will definitely not be easy. S.R.C. student politicians will probably not realise how much they have depended on her day to day organisation until she goes.

Mrs. Middleton does not see why students elected to do specific SRC jobs as well as a student employed on a paid, part-time annual basis should not be capable of handling all her daily duties. But one area, that of managing the funds of the SRC activities, will be difficult to fill. The

balancing of the budget and the close, efficient surveillance of the spending of funds needs some skill and experience — something that would be difficult for a student, only on an annual basis, to manage. Mrs. Middleton has suggested that upon her return from overseas she be employed on a part-time basis for this specific purpose. This seems to be a reasonable proposal.

But in deciding to replace Mrs. Middleton, the SRC should consider the long term proposals of SRC reform and Union reorganisation. The present SRC in accepting Mrs. Middleton's resignation passed the following motion: "That we offer the warmest thanks to Mrs. Middleton, who has so faithfully served the SRC for more than six years, guiding it through many crisis and receiving very little thanks for it."

ON DIT editors would like to express their thanks to Mrs. Middleton for handling ON DIT finances, and wish her well in her "retirement" in the many years to come.



ON DIT's social photographer caught this informal snapshot of Mrs. Middleton, (second from right), enjoying afternoon tea with the rest of the SRC administrative staff.

UNION DAY

FRIDAY 18 JUNE

It seems more like 18 years than 18 months since the builders, Hansen and Yuncken, took over the Union and started knocking holes in it.

The total cost of the project has been rather more than a million dollars, 40% from the A.U.C., 25% from the Union's reserves, and the rest from the A.N.Z. Bank as a loan and rent in advance, and from the University as a loan and a gift.

For a project of this size, and at this stage in the building industry in South Australia, it is surprising that we have managed to keep costs down to the budget and meet the completion date, except for siteworks.

Not that the new building is perfect — it is only the first stage of a two stage rebuilding programme, half a complete building. Consequently, in some respects the building is inconvenient especially regarding through access on the first floor level. And it looks funny from some angles, particularly from the north and northeast, exposing a large blank brick wall, behind which lurks machinery for the first stage and space for when the second stage is complete several years from now.

With the exception of the Bookshop perhaps, the Games Room is the most interesting single space in the Union and possible in the whole University. It is the same size as the Helen Mayo Refectory and will contain facilities for billiards, table tennis, darts etc., and seating for 300 as necessary for concerts, meetings, and even theatre of a fairly uncomplicated sort.

The room has enormous character with a very high ceiling following the roof form; all structural members are oregon — huge lumps of timber which fly over the eastern wall to the columns rising from the ground and enclosing the colonnades along the east face of the building. Two different sorts of lighting provide for the different activities, even theatre, provided the requirements are kept simple. All equipment in the room is portable and the lighting is moveable, ensuring the greatest possible flexibility in its use.

The upstairs refectory is of similar area; the ceiling is flat, and like the Games Room ceiling, of straw and western red cedar construction.

A new kitchen supports the refectory and two new private dining rooms which can be linked to accommodate nearly 200 people in comfort. It now becomes possible for the Union to cater adequately for practically any sort of function. These Dining Rooms also have a character which is quite outstanding.

Unfortunately the new second floor lounge is incomplete, being without its proper ceiling but it will still be a pleasant enough place, especially considering the terrible conditions that members have had to put up with for the last eighteen months.

But the most immediately useful to the active members of the Union is the club office area.

The Postgraduate Students Association and 30-odd student societies including some sporting clubs, will have a place to work and store stationery and club records. In addition there are three meeting rooms in the same area where it should be possible for most clubs to have their meetings.

All in all the Union has obtained a fair amount of additional space, of a most attractive sort at a considerable cost. The most important thing to remember is that this is the first stage of the building programme and there are many costs incurred in the first stage which will thereby be saved in the second.

The Universities Commission has been asked to pick up a large bill for the second stage in the next triennium. But whether they do the right thing this time or not the Union must complete its rebuilding programme fairly soon because of spiralling increases in costs and the incomplete nature of the present building.

Difficulties aside, we are very pleased with the first stage, we are very proud of it and hope you will be too.

Ralph Middenway,
Union Secretary.

The Union theoretically consists of staff, students and graduates, but recently it seems rather to have been composed of mud, noise and builder's hoardings.

Union Day is being held to show you the result of the last 18 months' work.

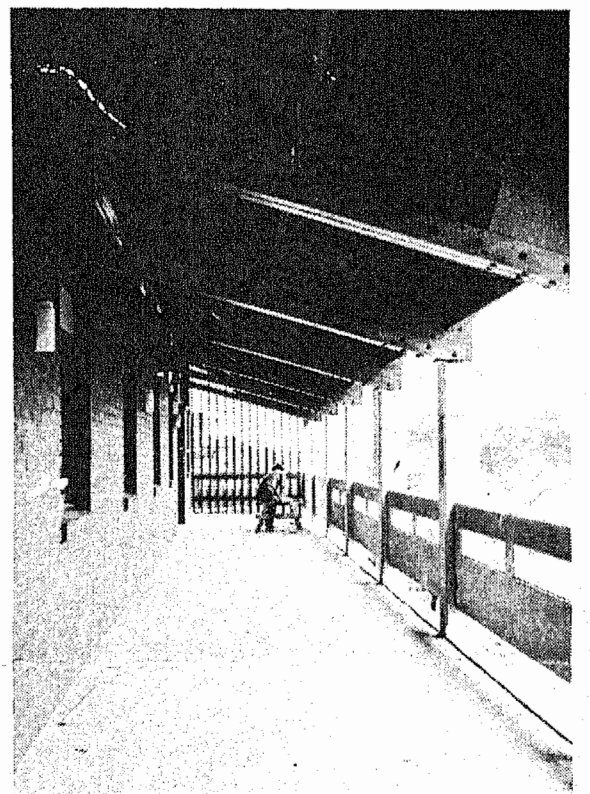
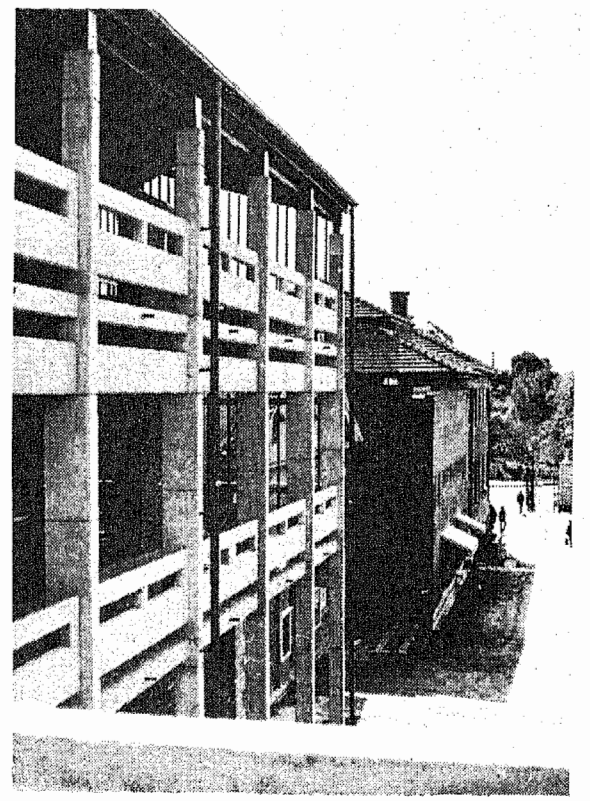
We hope you will visit all parts of the Union and help yourself to free tea and coffee any time after midday.

We have arranged some entertainment for you, starting at midday and including play reading, poetry reading, jazz concerts, chamber music concerts, rock concert, a disco, fencing and other sports demonstrations, jam sessions and two special events — a concert by the University of Adelaide Wind Quintet (soon to go off on its second world tour) and a grand slap-up "Union Night" debate with numerous stars of stage, screen and parliamentary chamber — the subject is "That modern husbands are a sorry lot."

PROGRAM

Open to all Union Members

- 9 am BOOKSHOP — open until 9 p.m.
UNION CELLAR — open until 5 p.m.
- 10.30 am HELEN MAYO REFECTORY — open until 7 p.m.
- 11 WILLS REFECTORY — open until 7 p.m.
UPPER REFECTORY — open until 11 p.m.
- NOON FREE TEA AND COFFEE at all serveries for the rest of the day.
- NOON GAMES ROOM "Masque of Comus" — John Milton. Play reading by Dramatic Society.
DINING ROOM Chamber Concert. Janis Laurs — Cello, Joannes Roose — Flute, Ian Riack — Guitar, Graham Williams — Piano; Contemporary Improvisation Group.
- 1 pm GAMES ROOM Rock Concert — Fraternity.
- 2 pm DINING ROOM Jazz Concert. Ted Nettlebeck Trio.
LOUNGE Poetry Reading. Geoff Thurley, Rob Johnson, Chris Pollnitz.
- 3 pm GAMES ROOM Sports Demonstration — Fencing Club, Judo Club.
DINING ROOM. Chamber Concert — Vytas Serelis — Sitar, Brass Quartet, Contemporary Improvisation Group.
LOUNGE. Folk Jam Session — Electronic music. Martin Wesley-Smith.
- 4 pm GAMES ROOM Sports Demonstration — Tae-Kwan Do. Table Tennis Club.
LOUNGE. Poetry Reading — Geoff Thurley, Rob Johnson, Chris Pollnitz.
DINING ROOM. Illustrated Talk Union Rebuilding Programme — Ralph Middenway.
- 5 pm GAMES ROOM. "Masque of Comus" — John Milton. Play reading by Dramatic Society.
DINING ROOM. TALK and FILM. Julian Bryant — New York Film Director.
LOUNGE. Folk jam session.
- 6 pm GAMES ROOM. CHAMBER CONCERT University of Adelaide Wind Quintet
Nutcracker Suite — Tchaikovsky
Siegfried Idyll — Wagner
Gopak, and Pictures at an Exhibition — Monssorgsky
L'arlesienne Suite — Bizet
- 7 pm GAMES ROOM
GRAND UNION NIGHT DEBATE
John Bannon, Union President will introduce SURPRISE SPEAKERS to debate the topic: "That modern husbands are a sorry lot!"
DINING ROOM. Chamber Concert — Byrd Recorder Consort, Fiona Robertson — Recorder, Flute Quartet, Wind Quintet. Joannes Roose — Flute, Graham Williams, Piano (1½ hours).
- 9 pm GAMES ROOM. Discotheque (3 hours)
DINING ROOM. Jazz Concert (2 hours) — The Goblins.



OLD WORLD VIEW

Surprise! Surprise! The Science Faculty once again votes to keep observers out of its meetings. One wonders what they have to hide. And wasn't the battle to have University committees open won about two years ago? It was almost predictable that after the 20 to 18 vote, three "keep them out" voters were seen leaving the room. Full story next week. Next meeting of the Science Faculty, 13th July.

AT LAST THE UNION REFORM

At a special Union Council meeting last Wednesday the following motion was unanimously passed: "That a General Meeting of Union members be held on Monday, 21st June to consider the proposed Union constitution as adopted by the Council prior to the amendments passed at General Meetings in October, 1970." A quorum of 40 Union members is needed. There will be a special ON DIT broadsheet giving details

of the proposed new Constitution. (See the first ON DIT for the inconclusive results of last year's motions, where the reforms lapsed.) Only one person expressed some opposition. The University's Registrar, Vic Edgloe, said that from last year's experience there was no widespread enthusiasm for reform and that a new Constitution which relies on general student meetings would not work. He said he was not opposed to reform.

"I'M ALL THAT'S LEFT" — A CONFERENCE.

Here the radical left in Adelaide debate and discuss problems of theory and action this Sunday (13th) at 2.00 p.m. in the Lady Symon Hall, University of Adelaide. Papers will be given by Bob Ellis, John Moran, Jack Barbalet, and Hal Alexander. All welcome to participate. Enquiries Adelaide Revolutionary Movement, P.O. Box 65, North Adelaide.

UNDERSTANDING APARTHEID

The Marxist seminar next Thursday, 17th June in the Lady Symon Hall at 1.00 p.m. will be on "The Political Economy of Apartheid". Papers by Lynn Arnold and Andrew McLwan.

PROSH

SRC meeting, Wednesday, 16th June in the cloisters to discuss the aims of Prosh and elect this year's Prosh committee.

It seems that the Grounds and Finance Committee of the Adelaide University Union Sports Association has recommended that the visiting South African Rugby team use the University oval on which to practice. This will not occur if the wear on the turf will be excessive. The Curator should perhaps be warned that hundreds of anti-apartheid demonstrators are not known to take the signs "keep the grass" at all seriously. Meeting to discuss this on 18th June (UNION day) on the Barr Smith Lawns.